bilateral level and in multilateral fora, have been strengthened. Norway supports India's candidature for permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council. Indo-Norwegian economic cooperation has been established in the areas of hydro power, shipping, metallurgy, information technology, scientific research and management studies and space.

(d) and (e) During the visit of the Norwegian Prime Minister, the new areas identified for bilateral cooperation include environment, energy, metallurgy, marine and agricultural products, ports, space, information technology, biotechnology, health, oil and gas and desalination of water. An Indo-Norwegian Joint Commission at the ministerial level for trade, economic and scientific cooperation is also being established.

Indian Demand for Most Favoured Nation Status

529. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Pakistan's business community has endorsed India's demand for granting Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Pakistan's military regime has rejected the proposal;

(c) whether the issue was taken up by the Prime Minister with General Mushrraf during his recent visit to the country; and

(d) if so, what has been the outcome?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) to (d) Pakistan has not granted reciprocal MFN status to India. It allows only a limited number (600) items to be imported from India. During his Summit Meeting with the Pakistan President in Agra on 15.7.2001, Prime Minister proposed that a group of experts of both countries be constituted to recommend measures to increase bilateral trade, economic and technical interaction between the two countries.

Increasing number of foreign establishments

530. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minsiter of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that foreign office establishments have grown enormously over the years;

(b) the number of Joint Secretaries deployed at Headquarters; and

(c) the number of consultative trips that IFS Officers make abroad normally in year alongwith the details of the visits during the last three years with expenditures thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) No, Madam.

(b) The number of Joint Secretaries deployed at Headquarters is 25.

(c) Does not arise. (Officers posted at the Ministry of External Affairs are not sent abroad on consultation).

India's views on Military Cooperation between Pakistan and China

531. SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether China has reacted sharply against India's charge of China's military build-up and has termed our objection to military cooperation between Beijing and Islamabad as irresponsible;

(b) if so, Government's reaction on these comments;

(c) whether India has responded to this adverse comment; and

(d) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) In response to a question raised by the PTI correspondent in Beijing on India's Ministry of Defence annual report 2000-2001, the Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman said, *inter-alia*, on 4.6.2001—

- "Attempting to seek an execuse to develop the military is not wise";
- "The Chinese stand on the Indian neclear issue is known to all";
- "China-Pakistan military cooperation is normal"; and
- For no reason, finding fault is irresponsible.

(b) to (d) Government of India is committed to developing friendly and good neighbourly relations with China on the basis of Panchsheel and mutual sensitivity to each other's concerns.